

## Imagining Childhood: Janhamamu and its Ideas of Young Readers

**Abstract:** Children's obsession with story books is of another level. By seeing the love of children for story books, "Janhamamu" came into market. At the initial period there are stories for children and one or two current affairs or general knowledge contents for students. In my current research work I have examine this magazine from the year 1995 to 2005. As it is a periodic magazine if we look each section of the magazine from the year 1995 we can observe some changes at the early part of 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The author of this magazine not only wrote for the children but also he has adult readers in his mind. Every story in this magazine has pictures related to the story which can seek the attention of the children towards the magazine. The magazine has stories on Indian Mythology to give children knowledge about our Indian tradition and culture. In the early part of 21<sup>st</sup> Century when there is a crisis seen in the magazine the magazine tried it's best to struggle in the market and to stay stable in the market. The magazine made a change in it's contents of the stories. There also changes in the quality of the pages in the magazine. The magazine started introducing different Contest like quiz Contest, Creative Contest, question on current affairs to attract the students towards the magazine. The magazine also some awareness contents like traffic signal, awareness about environmental pollution etc. The magazine tried it's level best to stay in the market.

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### I. Introduction

Children can imagine or fantasize the things they have listened. If someone is narrating a story before a child then he or she easily imagine those characters and incidents in their mind. If we are telling the story about animals and birds and the plot of the story is set in a forest then the children will imagine those things in mind and which is very obvious for children. Many children have habit of listening stories before sleeping. This is source of entertainment for them . Listening stories and reading story books have different impacts on children. Reading story books can be more effective than listening stories. It can enhance the reading skills and interest for reading on children.

To develop reading skills in children there is a magazine, Janhamamu firstly introduced in market in the year 1947, July. In this magazine there are stories mainly for children. It published periodically and comes to market for the entertainment of children. But while publishing the magazine the author didn't have only child readers in his mind, he has also contents for the adult readers. The magazine has stories on animals, kings, mythology, and ghosts and witches. There are also stories on science and history. At the initial stage it doesn't have much contents for the students but the demand of magazine starts increasing in market. Because it is popular among children and students. By looking at the demand of this magazine the author started introducing many new contents in the magazine. They had introduced quiz, life story of legends, geographical knowledge, historical knowledge, current affairs and general knowledge. They have also started quiz competition and creative contexts in the magazine. In those competitions there is also prize for the winners. In this way the magazine had gain it's popularity among children and students. The magazine have pictures in every pages related to its story. There is also comic format in this magazine to make it more attractive for children.

Before Television getting accessible for all kind of people, magazine and short story books are the sources of entertainment for children as well as adults too. At that time there are many story books and magazines available in market. The children's magazine "Janhamamu" had created it's own popularity in market. The demand of this magazine Increased because of its unique way of publishing stories. As we all know "Janhamamu" published periodically, the stories in it also came part wise. Like if in the month of January it has published a story on Mahabharata and it was not complete then the next part will publish in the coming section. It only had published stories from epics in this format. Because we can't place a whole epic in a magazine and the readers will get bored by reading a whole epic. And as because it is a children's magazine the children will not read an epic with patience and this cannot refresh their mind.

When Television came into market and it get accessible for all group of people, demand of story books started decreasing. At the initial stage Television was not a medium of entertainment for children, it was only used by elder members of family to watch News and sports. It started the attention of children when it has started showing animated series. These animated series are more interesting for children than story books. In story books they need to read those stories to get entertainment but watching animated series is more enjoyable than reading story books. Which stories children were reading in magazines they were started coming in

animated form in Television Which became an easier way for children to get entertainment. The magazine had a feature of publishing stories from epic like The Ramayana, The Mahabharata and many mythological stories periodically but these mythological stories are available for children in animated form on Television. Those Panchatantra Tales which are published in magazine are now available for children on Television. So children prefer to watch animated series instead of reading story books and magazines. For this reason the demand of the magazine "Janhamamu" started decreasing in market. To keep it's place in the market the magazine struggled a lot. It had started changing the content as well as the form of letters and the pages. After a particular period of time there were many changes can be observed in this magazine. The magazine had struggled in the age of Television to keep it's place in the market and to continuing it's demand among children. The magazine started quiz Contest, Creative Contest, comic format, contents on sports , current affairs and general knowledge to attract children as well as students towards it. The magazine tried it's best to keep it's place in the market and among children.

## **CHAPTER-1**

### **(IMAGINING THE READERS)**

"Janhamamu" magazine is not only made for the entertainment of children but also for the adults. The author also have adult readers in his mind while composing "Janhamamu". The magazine contains stories about kings, mythology ,magic and super natural elements and also ghost stories. The magazine not only published for entertainment purpose but also for knowledge. By reading this magazine the readers can get knowledge regarding history,geography,science and our general knowledge. The magazine not only entertain children but also help them in many ways. It helps children to develop their reading skill,developing vocabulary and teaching lessons for life.

In "Janhamamu" there are stories titled as "Boons from a Deity". The whole story is based upon a man who is a wood cutter by profession. He feeds up his family by selling wood in market but it is not enough for them . Being pity on his poverty the forest diety gives a boon to him so that he will not face difficulty to feed his family. But the wife of that person misused the boon of the diety for which the wood cutter get punished . From this story the children can learn a lesson not to be greedy in life .

Another story "Strength In Unity". This story is about a rich merchant and his sons. After the death of the merchant his four sons took over their father's business. But due to so personal dispute they got separated and their property also divided equally among the four sons. After separation the have faced many losses in their business. At the end they have realized that separation is the reason behind their loss . They realized their mistakes and united . As mentioned in the title the children can learn that there is strength in Unity. The magazine "Janhamamu" has many stories for children for their entertainment.

The magazine "Janhamamu" is not only aims to entertain children but also useful for adults. In this magazine there is quiz sections in which we can find questions on history, geography, general knowledge , sports etc . In each edition of the magazine there is a section named 'News Flash' , in this section there is news on environment, health, sports. There is also quiz section in the magazine. In this section there are questions on sports , science and current affairs. The magazine has also announced prize for those who have answered correctly. This is a way of entertaining children as well as adults and developing their knowledge. In this magazine there is a section named 'Immunization an Assurance of Good Health of Children' , in this section there is a chart showing when and how to vaccinate Children. This chart showing the age of starting vaccination, name of vaccine name of disease and how many times . This section of magazine is useful for parents. This is aware parents about vaccination of their child.

## **CHAPTER-2**

### **(USE OF COMIC FORMAT )**

The magazine "Janhamamu" has used comic format for fun, developing knowledge, social awareness etc. The magazine used comic format to represent stories from "Panchatantra" and "Jataka Tales" . 'The fearless four' represents the story of four friends who saved an orphanage. 'Mutiny At Vellore' tells about the mutiny started in Vellore among Britishers and the freedom fighters of Vellore.

One of the editions of magazine has used comic format to practice 'Point of view'. In this comic there are three people who are showing their own point of view for rain. There is also pictorial representation in this comic. In the comic the first person is not happy while it's raining . Because the rain is damaging all her equipments . From her out fit she looks like a reporter and she is out side. The second person in the comic is happy with rain because the rain will help his plants to grow. The third person is disappointed because her wedding ruined due to rain . Three different people have three different point of views on rain. From this the children can know that everything has advantages and disadvantages .

There is also comic format to develop the vocabulary of children. There is comic representation of body parts. There is pictures of body parts with name and with each body part their work also mentioned there.

From this the children can be know the name of body parts and their work easily. There is also comic representation of solar system and galaxy. It represents the complete galaxy through pictures and comic.

The writer also presented the good habits to which a child should follow and the bad habits to which a child should avoid in comic format. The fg.1 shows a child biting his nails and fg.2 shows the child is suffering from stomach ache . This can aware children that biting nails is a bad habit and this can cause disease. Fg.3 shows a child washing his hands before eating which is a good habit and to which children should follow. Fg.4 shows a child waking up early in the morning and doing exercise which is also a good habit. Another comic shows an awareness of how we can keep our environment pollution free.

In this magazine there are several comics. Some comics are about science , some are about mythology, some shows the activities a child should follow and some comics are to spread social awareness.

### **CHAPTER-3**

#### **(SUPERNATURALISM AND MAGICAL ELEMENTS)**

The magazine “Janhamamu” presented supernaturalism and magic thorough various stories. This is also a way of entertaining children and raising their interest to read stories. The writer has introduced demons, witches and magical elements in this magazine. The children can not connect those stories in their day to day life but the can get pleasure and can learn lessons for life by reading those stories.

In each edition of “Janhamamu” magazine there is a story titled Vikram Betala’. In this story Vikram, is a king and Betala is a portrayed as a ghost . Every story begins with the description of a dark night ,where the king Vikram to forest as usual climbed up a tree Where Vetala had taken the corpse . The king patiently brought down the body , put it on his shoulder and slowly climbed down the tree. But Vetala stopped the king by saying that it’s a dark night and the spirits and ghosts are wondering there . So the king have to solve the question Vetala going to ask him to escape himself from the cremation ground. Vetala always tells stories to the king and in the end of the story there is a question for the king and the king have to answer to the question to save his life.

There are also stories based on magic . The story ‘The Lazy Brahmin’ tells about the laziness of a brahmin and his mother and for this laziness they both punished. The brahmin was very poor and he was living with his mother. He supports himself and his old mother by begging but the alms he received was barely enough to support his family. One day the river goddess took pity on him and sends food for him in a basket. The day the poor brahmin and his mother were very happy by eating delicious food. But the brahmin was very lazy and stopped doing any work and repeats the previous action. To teach the brahmin a lesson the goddess punished him and his mother. From this story the children can learn not be lazy in life .

This magazine contains stories on ghost, witches, fairy tale and super natural elements. Every story has pictorial representation of its characters. By reading this magazine the children can create an imagination of what they are reading and listening. Children are much more curious about fairytale, ghosts and magic , so by portraying these elements in the magazine the writer is trying to attract children towards the magazine.

### **CHAPTER-4**

#### **PRESENTING MYTHOLOGY THROUGH STORY**

In this sectionof ‘Janhamamu’ there are stories on mythology. The magazine introduced the mythology of India through stories. This can help the children in many ways . Mythology teaches children moral values in a very interesting way and the magazine portraying Mythology in a way that can raise the intrest of children. There are several stories in this magazine taken from Indian Mythology which have positive effect on children’s mind.

“ Dedication OF Ekalavya” represents the respect and dedication of Ekalavya towards his teacher. Ekalavya was a young prince from a small village in ancient India. He had a passion for archery and dreamt for learning it from the famous guru Dronacharya but Dronacharya refused to teach Ekalavya because he did not belongs to a royal family. Determined to learn the art of archery Ekalavya decided to build a statue of Dronacharya and starts practice infront of it. One day while the royal students were on a hunt in the forest they discovered Ekalavya’s makeshift of archery range . They were amazed by his skills and impressed by his dedication. They returned to Dronacharya and told him about the talented archery. Dronacharya went to Ekalavya’s village and saw his own statue surrounded by arrows. He was impressed by Ekalavya’s dedication and asked Ekalavya about his guru. Ekalavya said that he was practiced infront his statue and Dronacharya is his guru. Dronacharya was deeply impressed by the skills of Ekalavya but couldn’t accept them because he promised to make Arjun the best archery on the planet . To keep his promise to Arjun Dronacharya asked Ekalavya his Guru dakshina. Ekalavya was overjoyed with the honor and said he would give anything his guru asks. Then Dronacharya asked Ekalavya for his right thumb as his dakshina. The intention of Dronacharya behind this was to prevent Ekalavya from becoming a better archer. But Ekalavya did not hesitate to offer his thumb to his guru. The story teach the immense power of dedication. Ekalavya knows that after offering his

right thumb to his guru he couldn't perform archery anymore but he didn't hesitate in giving his guru dakshina. It shows his deep respect for his guru and his dedication.

The story 'The Faith of Prahalada' tells the story of Hiranyakashyapu and his son Prahalad. Prahalada is the son of Hiranyakashyapu, the daitya king. Prahalada is an innocent boy and he is a true devotee of Lord Vishnu. But his father is not happy with his devotion for Vishnu. Hiranyakashyapu tries many times to kill Prahalada. Once Hiranyakashyapu ordered his soldiers to Prahalada from the hill top and once he burn fire around Prahalada to kill him. But every time he fails in his attempts. Hiranyakashyapu is atheist in nature. Through several years of penance Hiranyakashyapu developed a boon that he would not die either during day or night, either in his house or outside, by battle from either man or animal and by no weapon created from metal or wood. The boon gave him a lot of power so he lived carelessly. Hiranyakashyapu was very irritated with his son's devotion for god. He wished his to worship no one but himself. Out of anger once Hiranyakashyapu put Prahalada in boiling oil but Prahalada came out with no harm. Hiranyakashyapu tried many times to kill Prahalada but each time God protects him. Once Hiranyakashyap asked Prahalada where his god is? Prahalada said, god is every where. Prahalada was standing next to a pillar so Hiranyakashyap asked is your god in this pillar? Prahalada replied "yes". After hearing this the king broke the pillar with anger. The next moment Lord Vishnu emerged from the pillar in the avatar of Narasimha, half human and half lion. He put the king on his lap and tear him with his feet.

This story introduced one of the avatars of Vishnu to children. The king got boon that he would die in neither day nor night so the lord killed him in twilight time, he would die neither by metallic weapon nor by wood so the lord killed him with his feet. Children can learn from the story that god is every where but one needs to chant his name with love and devotion. Prahalada represents the picture of a true devotee and the children can also come to know that good always wins over evil.

The story "Satyavadi Harishchandra" is based upon Indian Mythology. HarishChandra is known for his truthfulness. Once all the gods decided to test the king so they requested Viswamitra to help them. Then one fine day when the king went for hunting to the forest he suddenly heard screaming of a woman so he ran into Viswamitra's ashram. This activity of the king disturbed Viswamitra in meditation. To cool down the sage's anger Harishchandra said he would donate his kingdom to Viswamitra. The sage agreed and asked Harishchandra for some dakshina while he was leaving. The king begged Viswamitra to give him one month time to earn something. The king left the kingdom with his family and left for Kashi. Harishchandra tried a lot to find any work but was not able. On his wife's request he sold his son and wife to a Brahmin but the money he got was not enough so he sold himself to a person who works in a cremation ground. Once while Harishchandra's son got bitten by a snake when plucking flowers and fruits in the garden and died on the spot. Harishchandra's wife took his son's dead body to the cremation ground. Harishchandra was devastated to see his only son dead then he asked for tax to perform the cremation of his son even after knowing that his wife has nothing. This story shows the truthfulness of the king and his dedication towards his duty. From this story the children can know that the person who is always truthful, honest caring is rewarded.

## **CHAPTER-5**

### **DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE**

The magazine "Janhamamu" not only publish stories for children but also many useful informations on science, history, sports and general knowledge. It is the best way of developing the knowledge of children. If we will directly provide science books or general knowledge books to children to read those books and remember things written on it then it will be very difficult for them to remember those things. But the magazine choose a very unique and interesting way to teach children.

In the magazine there is a content named 'Kalidoscope', in this section there is a short story titled as "The 'Head' Hog". In this story the hedgehog is trying to cross the road but die to the running vehicles the hedgehog felt difficulty to cross the road. One of the friends of hedgehog told him about the zebra crossing on the road and advised him to first look both side of the road and cross through zebra crossing and the hedgehog successfully crossed the road. From this story the children can be aware about the traffic signals and rules.

In the "Kalidoscope" section there is also stories to create social awareness. One of the short stories from "Kalidoscope" is 'Nature's Anger'. In this story the writer tries to show the result of cutting trees and building houses and industries. This results in environmental pollution and heavy flood. Destruction of forest brings insufficient rain, air pollution and global warming. And in the end of the story the writer advised the children to plant atleast one tree every year.

In this section of the magazine there are short poems published for children. Those poems are short and the language of those poems are very simple which can be easily understandable for children. The important thing in those poems are, in the end of every poem the name of the person who has written this was mentioned and those poems are mainly written by the students of twelve or thirteen years of age group. This can encourage the children to express their thoughts through poems. In this section there are also quiz to gain the

knowledge of the children and puzzles to improve their IQ level. There are puzzles for every group of children. There are two similar pictures which asked the students to find out the difference in it and there are two pictures one is colourful and another is asked to put colour according to the first picture. There is also dot joining for children. This activities can improve the eye hand coordination of children.

## **CHAPTER-6**

### **( HOW THE MAGAZINE SURVIVED IN THE AGE OF TELEVISION)**

As we know children's magazines are mainly published in purpose of entertaining children. There are stories, poems and comics to entertain the children with all age group. Like every children's magazine "Janhamamu" also published stories, poems and comics to entertain children. If we go back to the time when Television is not accessible for all group of people, there story books, magazines are the sources to entertain children, not only children but also adults. When Television is not accessible for everyone, the demand of "Janhamamu" among children and adults is high. In the magazine there are articles on sports, current affairs along with stories. This magazine became a good source for children to acquire knowledge. But Television became easily accessible for all the demand of the magazine started decreasing because from Television everything got available visually before children.

If we observe the magazine "Janhamamu" from the year 1995 to 2005 we can notice many changes. If we take the magazine into observation from the year 1995 to 1999, we can see that the cover page of the magazine is not much attractive. The pictures printed on the front page are not clear. There are also black and white pages and pictures in the magazine. Only the picture of stories are printed in colour except this the advertisements and quiz are black and white print.

From the year 1999 onwards we can observe many changes in the context as well as the printing and writing style in the magazine. Before 1999 the page quality of the magazine is not so good, those are normal quality papers. But from the year 1999 the magazine started printing in glossy papers. The picture printed in the magazine are clear and attractive and the letters are also clear. The magazine stopped black and white printing. With the change in the quality of papers in the magazine the price of the magazine also raised.

There is not only change in the picture and papers but also in the content of the magazine. Upto 1995 there are only stories quiz and sports articles in the magazine and the stories are mainly about Indian Mythology, Panchatantra Tales and Indian folk Tales. But a particular period of time there are changes in the theme and plot of the stories. There are also stories like 'A Bride For Pharaoh' which is a tale from Egypt, 'Quetzacotl' a South American tale. The purpose behind writing stories of foreign countries is to attract children towards the magazine and telling them about the another countries.

Apart from the stories in the magazine there are also historical contents in it. 'India then and Now' is a historical content which tells the condition of India before Britishers came to India and after Britishers came to India. Before Britishers came to India there is Unity among Indians. This story shows how Britishers applied the divide and rule formula and ruled for a long time in India. It also shows the impact of British rule over Indians and how Indians started accepting foreign culture. 'Prime minister a Third Time' tells about Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee who took oath as the Prime minister of India for the third time on October 13. It also talks about his simplicity and the success of his life.

In this magazine there is a section named 'Sports Snippets'. In this section there is articles regarding sports. This is published in every edition of the magazine. This has contents like 'World Record In Skipping' which tells about G.Ramprasad who skips 40,181 times in five hours of skipping and set a record. This section has contents regarding records made in the field of sports. It gives knowledge to its readers.

In the year 1996 there are some new contents introduced in the magazine such as 'Towards Better English', 'India In 20<sup>th</sup> Century', 'Puzzles', 'Photo Caption Contest', 'Creative Contest', 'Discovery of India', and 'Unsolved Mystries'. In the 'Towards Better English' section there are questions asked on grammar, vocabulary, idioms etc. In each question there is an incident cited to make the question more clear and easy for the reader to understand. For example: In the year 1999 in the 'Towards Better English' section there is a geometrical term used in English among friends during a conversation and the phrase is, "Now, you are flying off at a tangent". It helps the children to rise their thinking capacity and helps them in learning vocabulary and phrases in English.

The magazine also started showing the pictures of India during British rule and the incidents and movements are also mentioned in those section. 'March Towards Freedom' tells the story of how Freedom fighters of India have struggled to give India Freedom. It also tells the story of Non-cooperation movement and who have joined in this movement with Mahatma Gandhi and it shows how India get Independence in the year 1947, August 15. It awakens students about how our country struggled for a long period of time under British rule. It helps the students to know about the history of India.

The magazine have new contents titled as 'Photo Caption Contest' and 'Creative Contest'. In 'Photo Caption Contest' section, there are pictures and there are asked to Caption those pictures and there are prizes for

those who will win the Contest. Similarly the 'Creative Contest' also asked to show their Creative by writing poems, stories and through drawing. There is also prize for the winner.

In the latter part of 20<sup>th</sup> Century and early period of 21<sup>st</sup> Century where there is Television getting easily accessible for everybody, the magazine tried it's best to keep entertaining children and as well as adults. Television became the best source to get entertainment and knowledge too. To attract the readers towards the magazine, it tried it's best ways. There are changes in the content as well as the quality of papers used in the magazine .

## **II. Conclusion**

Children are much more interested in Watching cartoons or animated series on Television than reading story books. Because watching Television and get entertained is easier than reading a story book or a children's magazine. Watching Television can refresh children's mind but it has some bad impact on children. It can affect the eye sight of children. When children read story books or listen stories from parents or from elders it can enhance their imagination. While listening a story children can make an imaginative figures of the characters which he or she is listening. And when a child is reading story books it can also increase their vocabulary and also increase their interest towards reading. In the initial stage of a child, story books are very good medium to attract children towards reading and children can easily learn vocabulary and some general knowledge in the early stage . But watching animated series or cartoons on Television can narrow their thinking. In Television everything is already present before the children, they do not need to think or imagine characters in there mind. So reading story books or magazines are really very useful for children as well as adults.

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